



September 2012

Drought Disaster Assistance

USDA has streamlined the disaster designation process, lowered emergency loan rates and created greater CRP flexibility to help farmers and ranchers in drought-stricken areas across the country.

FSA's low-interest emergency loans will help producers recover from losses due to drought, and other natural disasters. The interest rate has been reduced to 2.25 percent, providing a much-needed resource for producers hoping to recover from production and physical losses associated with natural disasters.

New guidelines were announced for emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. Annual rental payments for farmers enrolled in the CRP, who use those lands for emergency grazing and hay production, will be reduced by 10 percent instead of 25 percent. Also, because of the current severe drought, all counties with a drought level of D 0 or higher, as measured by the US Drought Monitor, are approved for emergency haying and grazing outside of the primary nesting season (PNS).

USDA encourages all farmers and ranchers to contact their crop insurance companies and local USDA Farm Service Agency Service Centers, as applicable, to report damages to crops or livestock loss. In addition, USDA reminds livestock producers to keep thorough records of losses, including additional expenses for such things as food purchased due to lost supplies. More information about federal crop insurance may be found at www.rma.usda.gov. Additional resources to help farmers and ranchers deal with disaster losses may be found at www.usda.gov/disaster.

Maricopa County FSA Office

623-535-5055 phone
623-536-5261 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/AZ

Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Maricopa Staff

Christina Day, County
Executive Director

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Farm Loan Manager

Tim Garcia, District
Conservationist

Hispanic Women Farmer/Rancher Sign-Up

Hispanic and women farmers/ranchers that allege discrimination by the USDA in the past decades can file claims September 24, 2012 through March 25, 2013. The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for a certain time period between 1981 – 2000. Call center representatives can be reached at **1-888-508-4429**. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or contact the website: www.farmerclaims.gov) and the claims package will be mailed to the claimants.

NAP Losses and Deadlines

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing of a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

See NAP 2013 crop year deadlines on page 4 in this issue.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

This process ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments and; \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Actively Engaged

FSA wants to remind producers about the eligibility rules that require program applicants to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These eligibility rules apply to payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

To be eligible, the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** normally make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management on the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule occurs only if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management and;
- The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members doesn't exceed \$40,000.

Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will

continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office, RMA, or the Office of the Inspector General

FSA Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, contact your nearest FSA office for details about direct and guaranteed loans.

Ask your current lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your current lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000.

The one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff to schedule an appointment.

Electronic Services Available

With Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive both approvals and direct deposit payments within 48 hours.

To participate in these electronic services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information.

To utilize electronic services a producer needs an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at www.eauth.usda.gov/ followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification.

If you have more questions, or would like assistance establishing your account, just contact your local USDA Service Center and talk with our trained FSA personnel.

Farm Safety

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand; it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs (PTOs), and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous and lethal for both adults and children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from farm equipment in operation. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

FSA wants all farmers to have a productive and safe crop year, and that begins with putting safety first.

Beginning and Limited Resource Loans

FSA has a program to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, FSA can provide financing through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for 10 years or less
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements and loan approval is not guaranteed.

Additional program information and loan applications are available at local FSA offices or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the date the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity, whichever is earlier. Beneficial interest means a) retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, b) being responsible for loss or damage to the commodity and c) possessing title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also stipulates compliance with the following requirements: conservation and wetland protection; beneficial interest; acreage reporting and minimum grade and quality standards set by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, exist in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical and/or ACRE programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions such as assessing liquidated damages, calling in the loan and denial of future commodity and farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Maricopa County
 FSA Office
 12409 West Indian
 School Rd, #B-201
 Avondale, AZ 85392



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Sign Up for FSA Fence Post for Daily Updates

The Farm Service Agency *Fence Post* is an online newsletter that is updated on an almost daily basis. It contains articles of interest on the agency's programs and departments, as well as success stories from the field. To access *Fence Post* visit <http://fsa.blogs.govdelivery.com/>. On this website, producers can sign up for *Fence Post* updates by putting an email address in box that says "Get Email Updates" and then navigating to the publication's sign up check box.

Selected Interest Rates for August 2012	
Farm Operating - Direct	.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	1.125%
Limited Resource	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	1.250%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	1.875%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
Sept 30 th	2013 NAP sign up deadline for: Alfalfa, Seed, Forage, Crops, (Intended use of FG, Hay –Mechanically Harvested) Forage Crops (Intended use GZ, Grazing)
Oct 31 st	Barley, Cantaloupe, Honeydews, Lettuce, Oats, Onions, Rye, Wheat
Nov 20 th	Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Grapefruit, Greens, All Honey, Lemons, Peaches, Pears, Peas, Plums, Tangelos, Watermelon
Nov 30 th	Potatoes
Dec 31	Pistachios